XXIII.—REPETITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES AT THE BEGINNING OF CONSECUTIVE TERCETS IN DANTE'S *DIVINE COMEDY*

The *Divine Comedy* contains three examples of the repetition of a word or a phrase at the beginning of successive lines,[1] one where the first word of a line is repeated from the last of the preceding line,[2] another pas-

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[1]   *Per Me Si Va* Nella Città Dolente,
       Per Me Si Va Nell' Eterno Dolore,
       Per Me Si Va Tra La Perduta Gente.

                                                    (*Inf.* III, 1-3.)

A similar artifice occurs in *Par.* I, 115-7; xxvII, 7-9.   Repetitions of this class are more or less common in the different literatures known to Dante.   Examples of anaphora in Latin may be found in an article by Professor B. O. Foster, *On Certain Euphonic Embellishments in the Verse of Propertius* (*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association,* Vol. XL, pp. 39-40; 52). Note especially the following lines from Propertius:

       Vidistis pleno teneram candore puellam,
       Vidistis fusco. ducit uterque color;
       Vidistis quandam Argiva prodire figura,
       Vidistis nostras, utraque forma rapit;—

                                                    (II, 25, 41 ff.)

This usage was especially common in Old French and Old Provençal.   In a poem of twenty-five lines by Christine de Pisan (Bartsch-Wiese, *Chrestomathie de l'ancien français,* 89 c), all of the lines except one begin with *Je congnois.*   For examples of repetition in consecutive initial lines in Provençal, compare Raynouard, *Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours,* vol. v, p. 25; pp. 200-1.

For a similar use of repetition in English, compare *Kying Alisaunder,* 3205-16 (Weber's *Metrical Romances,* I, pp. 133-4), where the word *Mony* occurs at the beginning of twelve successive lines.

[2]   Ricominciò: "Noi semo usciti fuore
       Del maggior corpo al ciel ch' è pura *luce:*
       Luce intellettual, piena d' *amore;*

sage where a phrase occurs three times in succession,[3] and a few instances of a word riming with itself.[4] The most

> *Amor* di vero ben, pien di *letizia;*
> *Letizia* che trascende ogni dolzore.
>
> (*Par.* xxx, 38-42.)

We note the same device in a Provençal poem (Raynouard, *op. cit.,* vol. v, p. 298) :

> En est son fas cansoneta *novella;*
> *Novella* es quar eu cant de *novell;*
> E de *novell* ai chauzit la plus *bella,*
> *Bell'* en totz sens, et tot quan fai es *bel*
> Per que m'es *bel* qu'ieu m' aleger' e m *deport,*
>
> Quar en *deport* val pauc qui no s *deporta.*
> Jois *deporta* mi quar am domn' *isnella;*
> *Isnella* es sella que m ten *isnel:*
> *Isnel* cor n'ai quar tan gen si *capdella*
> Qu'il *capdela* mi ses autre *capdel,*
> Qe mais *capdel* non quier mar per *conort:*
> Per gieu *conort* qu'om no s pes qui m *conorta.*

With reference to this poetical device, Tozer (*Commentary on Dante's Divina Commedia, Par.* xxx, 40) says: " It is occasionally found in the troubadour poets." Professor Foster (*op. cit.,* p. 51) cites several examples from Propertius where a word at or near the end of the hexameter is repeated in the beginning of the short line. A. J. Butler calls attention to early Italian poems (*The Fore-runners of Dante,* I, XIII, XXII, XLV), in which each stanza opens with one or two of the words with which its predecessor concludes. The author of *The Pearl* (*Early English Text Society,* vol. I, pp. 1-37) also makes use of a similar device.

[3]
> Quegli ch' usurpa in terra *il loco mio,*
> *Il loco mio, il loco mio,* che vaca
> Nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio.
>
> (*Par.* XXVII, 22-4.)

Compare also *Jeremiah,* VII, 4. For examples of the repetition of a phrase in prose, compare *Convivio* IV, 5, where *E non pose Iddio le mani* occurs four times.

[4]
> Così mi si cambiaro in maggior feste
> Li fiori e le faville, sì ch'io *vidi*
> Ambo le corti del ciel manifeste.

complex and interesting examples of the repetition of words and phrases in our poem, however, are those occurring at the beginning of several consecutive tercets. The object of this kind of repetition is, in general, to draw attention to a succession of forciable examples of something that is to be illustrated. In *Purgatorio* xii, 25-63, we have a most striking instance of this symmetrical arrangement. The purpose of these lines is to call attention to a series of notable examples of pride. Each example is described in a single tercet and the tercets are divided into groups of four, the initial word of the first group being *Vedea,* that of the second *O,* and that of the third *Mostrava.* Finally, in a tercet describing the fall of Troy, the most notable instance of defeated pride, all of these words are resumed and united.[5] In the very phrasing of these descriptions we note a kind of " architectural symmetry," as if the poet were endeavoring to convey a picture of the lifelike carvings on the floor through the symmetry of his verse.

> O isplendor di Dio, per cu'io *vidi*
> L'alto trionfo del regno verace,
> Dammi virtù a dir com'io lo vidi!
>
> (*Par.* xxx, 94-9.)

Compare also *per amenda* (*Purg.* xx, 65-9) and *Cristo* (*Par.* xii, 71-5; xiv, 104-8; xix, 104-8; xxxii, 83-7). In Provençal poetry the same word sometimes occurs in rime once in each stanza of a poem. In Raynouard (*op. cit.*, vol. v, pp. 411-13) we find a poem of six stanzas, the word *lenga* being repeated at the end of the fifth line of all the stanzas except the last (where the repeated word occurs at the end of the first line). A similar device is found in two other poems contained in Raynouard's collection (pp. 413-4; 414-6). Compare also the repetition of the word *lonh* at the end of the second and fourth lines of all the stanzas of a poem (with the exception of the last, which contains only three lines) by Jaufre Rudel (Appel's *Provenzalische Chrestomathie,* p. 15).

[5] This entire passage is quoted *infra,* p. 548.

Another striking instance of elaborate repetition and symmetrical arrangement is found in the *Paradiso* (XIX, 115-132), where the poet is describing what will be seen in the book containing the record of human deeds when it shall be opened at the Last Judgment. The examples mentioned in this series are intended to illustrate the misdeeds of the Christian princes of Dante's time. The description is continued through nine tercets, the first three beginning with *Lì si vedrà,* the next three with *Vedrassi,* and the last three with *E.* The first three tercets will illustrate: [6]

> *Lì si vedrà,* tra l'opere d'Alberto,
> Quella che tosto moverà la penna,
> Per che il regno di Praga fia diserto;
> *Lì si vedrà* il duol che sopra Senna
> Induce, falseggiando la moneta,
> Quei che morrà di colpo di cotenna;
> *Lì si vedrà* la superbia ch' asseta,
> Che fa lo Scotto e l' Inghilterra folle,
> Sì che non può soffrir dentro a sua meta.

In the twentieth canto of the *Paradiso* (40-73) the eagle names the six spirits, who, on account of their pre-eminence in justice, form the pupil of its eye and its eye-

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[6] A poem bearing a very striking resemblance to these lines in Dante is found in *Rime di Trecentisti Minori*, a cura di Guglielmo Volpi, Firenze (Sansoni), 1907, pp. 247-51. This little poem (entitled *Profezia*) consists of thirty-seven stanzas, thirty-one of which begin with *Vedrai*. The following quotation will illustrate:

> *Vedrai* colei che veste
> Quella ch' ha sette teste
> Avrà di gran tempeste
>   E gran paura.
> *Vedrai* dreto alle mura
> Rinchiusi con rancura:
> La lor fiera armadura
>   Saran gli spromi.

brow. The description of these six spirits includes six sections of six verses each, and the second tercet of every section begins with *Ora conosce*. The four following tercets will serve to illustrate the character and purpose of the repetition in this passage:

> Colui che luce in mezzo per pupilla,
>   Fu il cantor dello Spirito Santo,
>   Che l'arca traslatò di villa in villa:
> *Ora conosce* il merto del suo canto,
>   In quanto effetto fu del suo consiglio,
>   Per lo remunerar ch'è altrettanto.
> Dei cinque che mi fan cerchio per ciglio,
>   Colui che più al becco mi s'accosta,
>   La vedovella consolò del figlio:
> *Ora conosce* quanto caro costa
>   Non seguir Cristo, per l'esperienza
>   Di questa dolce vita e dell' opposta.
> E quel che segue in la circonferenza
>   Di che ragiono, per l'arco suferno,
>   Morte indulgiò per vera penitenza:
> *Ora conosce* che il giudizio eterno
>   Non si trasmuta, quando degno preco
>   Fa crastino laggiù dell' odierno.

It will be observed that the description of each of these six spirits occupies two tercets. The first tercet deals with the life of the hero on earth and the second with his condition in Paradise. The symmetrical arrangement of this magnificent passage is not only pleasing to the ear, but the contrast brought out by the repeated phrase *Ora conosce* also makes the description more vivid.

Dante's purpose in repeating words and phrases was probably two-fold, namely, for the sake of euphony and of emphasis. In the remaining examples of this poetic device the idea of emphasis or rhetorical repetition seems to be more prominent than in the case of the three examples already cited. For instance, in the fifth canto of

the *Inferno* (100-7), Francesca da Rimini, in describing the power of love over her and her lover, says: [7]

> "*Amor*, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,
>   Prese costui della bella persona
>   Che mi fu tolta; e il modo ancor m'offende.
> *Amor*, che a nullo amato amar perdona,
>   Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
>   Che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.
> *Amor* condusse noi ad una morte:
>   Caina attende chi vita ci spense."

The display of sympathy and affection between Virgil and his fellow-countryman Sordello furnishes Dante an opportunity of inveighing against the want of patriotism in Italian cities. A series of examples illustrating this general discord and strife is given in *Purgatorio* VI, 106-7, where *Vieni* occurs at the beginning of four successive tercets addressed to Albert of Germany. In *Paradiso* XV, 100-11, the immodesty of the Florentine society of Dante's time is described in four tercets each beginning with *Non*. [8]

Instances of repetition similar to those cited above are also found in a well-known type of medieval composition, the Provençal *enueg*. The two main characteristics of this kind of poem, according to Raymond Thompson Hill, [9] are: (1) the absence of continuity of thought, and

[7] For a similar use of repetition in Dante's lyrics compare *Canz.* 17 and *Son.* 33.

[8] In *Paradiso* XIII, 94-102, we find a group of three tercets beginning with *Non*.

In a poem of four stanzas by Lorenzo Moschi (Guglielmo Volpi, *op. cit.*, IV), the word *Benedetta* occurs at the beginning of each stanza. Compare the Beatitudes (Math. V, 3-11; Lu. VI, 20-22) and also the repetition of the word *cursed* in Deut. XXVII, 15-26; XXVIII, 16-19.

[9] See *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. XXVII, pp. 265-6.

(2) " the repetition at regular or irregular but frequent intervals of a word or phrase which indicates the attitude of the poet."

The best examples of the *enueg* are found in the works of the Monk of Montaudon.[10] In a poem of nine stanzas by this author, a form expressing the idea of vexation (usually *enoia*) occurs in the first and fifth [11] line of each stanza. The first two stanzas of this poem are as follows: [12]

> Fort m' *enoia*, so auzes dire?
> Hom parliers qu'es avols servire;
> Et hom que trop vol autr' aucire
> M' *enoia*, e cavals que tire;
> Et *enoia* m, si Dieus m'aiut,
> Joves hom, quan trop port' escut
> Que negun colp no i a avut,
> Capellan e monge barbut
> E lausengier bec esmolut.
> E tenc dona per *enoiosa*,
> Quant es paubra et orgoillosa,
> E marit qu'ama trop sa sposa,
> Neus s'era domna de Tolosa;
> Et *enoia* m de cavalier
> Fors de son pais ufanier,
> Quant en lo sieu non a mestier
> Mas sol de pizar el mortier
> Pebre o d'estar al foguier.

In another poem by the Monk of Montaudon [13] the word *enueia* occurs in the first line of each of the seven strophes, and is repeated once or twice within the stanza.[14]

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[10] See Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-8.

[11] In five of the stanzas *enoia* occurs three times.

[12] *Provenzalische Chrestomathie* (second edition), von Carl Appel, 43. Compare also E. Philippson, *Der Mönch von Montaudon*, Halle, 1873, p. 51; Bartsch, *Chrestomathie*, p. 134; Otto Klein, *Die Dichtungen des Mönchs von Montaudon*, Marburg, 1885, p. 54.

[13] See Raynouard, *op. cit.*, vol. v, pp. 244-6.

[14] Compare Raynouard, *op. cit.*, where we find a similar repe-

With reference to this type of poetry in Italian litera-
ture, Mr. Hill says: [15] " In order to follow the more
consistent and complete development of the *enueg,* it is
necessary to turn to the literature of Italy, where this kind
of poem received an early start and finally attained its
most perfect maturity. The *enueg* or *noie,* as it is known
in its Italian form, appeared in Italy in the first part of
the thirteenth century."

The most elaborate example of the Italian *noie* is that
of the fourteenth-century writer Antonio Pucci.[16] The
poem is entitled *Capitolo morale* [17] and consists of more
than three hundred verses. It is written in *terza rima*
and all the *terzine* except the first five and the last begin
with *A noia m'è.* The repeated phrase occurs, therefore,
about a hundred times in this little poem.

The examples of the *enueg* cited above will suffice to
show the main characteristics of this kind of poem. A
comparison of these poems with the more elaborate in-
stances of repetition found in the *Divine Comedy* lead one
to believe that Dante's use of this device is a survival of
the *enueg* type of composition. This connection becomes
very clear when we examine the later forms of this kind
of poetry. While the earliest examples of the *enueg* con-
sist of a series of disconnected ideas and the repeated word

tition of *enueia* in another poem by the same author. For other
examples of the *enueg* in Provençal literature, compare Hill, *op. cit.*,
pp. 269-74.

[15] See *op. cit.,* pp. 276-7.

[16] For a general discussion of the *enueg* in Italy, compare Hill,
op. cit., pp. 276-293.

[17] See Kenneth McKenzie, *Le Noie di Antonio Pucci secondo la
lezione del codice di Wellesley già Kirkupiano (Studi dedicati a
Francesco Torraca,* pp. 179-90) ; *The Oxford Text of the Noie of
Antonio Pucci* (Reprinted from *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues
and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge,* Boston, 1913).

is always a form meaning 'vexation' or 'that which is vexing,' [18] in its later developments we find greater freedom both in the connection of the thought of the poem and in the use of repetition. For instance, Pucci's *Capitolo morale,* the most elaborate form of the *enueg* that we have, " is not composed of disconnected sentences arranged by chance, but consists of a series of well-chosen observations grouped in special classes according as they refer to religion, politeness, social relations, or table manners." [19] If we compare Pucci's poem with any one of the examples of repetition noted in the *Divine Comedy,* we shall observe also that the two are exact parallels so far as the continuity of thought is concerned. In both cases a word or a phrase is repeated at the beginning of a number of successive tercets, and, while each tercet contains an observation, the series of observations serve to illustrate a general subject.

In the later forms of the *enueg* or *noie* the repeated word is also varied. For example, in a Portuguese poem of three hundred and forty-one verses, attributed to *Grygorio Alfonso criado do bispo d'Evora,* the alternate lines begin with *arreneguo* or *rreneguo.* However, the best illustration of the liberty permitted in the use of repeated forms is found in the following *canzone* of Bindo Bonichi: [20]

> *Guai* a chi nel tormento
> Sua non puo spander voce
> Et quando foco il coce
> Gli convien d'allegrezza far sembianti.
> *Guai* a chi suo lamento
> Dir non po chi li noce

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[18] For examples of the *plazer,* a similar type of composition, compare Hill, *op. cit.,* pp. 268-9; 284-5.

[19] See Hill, *op. cit.,* pp. 290-1.

[20] See *Scelta di Curiosità Letterarie,* vol. LXXXII, pp. 65-8.

Et qual gli è piu feroce
Costretto è d'aggradir, se gli è d'avanti.
Guai a chi 'l ben di se in altrui commette
Che 'l non certo di se, vive languendo;
Et sovente temendo
D'alto in bassezza ritorna suo stato.
Guai a chi a servir alcun si mette,
Che cominci amistà frutto cherendo;
Perchè, l'util fallendo,
Dimostra 'l fine el cominci ar viziato.

    Grave è potere in pace
Injuria sofferire,
Da cui dovria venire,
Per merito servire e onorare.
Grav' è all' hôm verace
Reprension, se 'l fallire
D' altrui fa in se perire
Le virtù e coi vizii dimorare.
Grav' è stare innocente tra i corrutti
Fa lunga usanza debile 'l costante
Non avrai virtù tante
Che sol non sia, se tu loro abbandoni.
Grav' è all' om poter piacere a tutti
Perchè a ciascun suo piace simigliante
Così il leve, e 'l pesante
Son differenti: Piaci dunque a boni.

    Foll' è chi si diletta
E a diservir prende
Hôm che non si difende,
Perchè fortuna tolle e da podere.
Foll' è chi non aspetta
Prezzo di quel che vende:
Così chi l'altro offende.
Di quel che fa de' guiderdone avere
Foll' è chi si compreso è d'arroganza
Che di se presumme valer tanto
Che fa del pianger canto
Perch' ômo inciampa talor, e non cade.
Foll' è chi chier d' offesa perdonanza,
Et mentre offende con celato manto,
Perchè l' offeso alquanto
Dimostra non veder chi die tro il trade.

Sagg' è chi ben misura
La sua operazione
Et sempre a se prepone
Se, mentre fà, come ricevitore.
Sagg' è l' ôm che procura
Viver ogni stagione
In modo che ragione
Vinca il voler; e quei ne và col fiore.
Sagg' è chi l' ôm non giudica per vesta,
Ma per lo far che 'n lui si sente e vede
Saver talor si crede,
Per apparenza, in tal che dentro è vano
Sagg' è l' ôm circundato da tempesta,
Quel che scampar non po, se'n don concede
Avendo sempre fede
Che dopo 'l monte puo trovar lo piano.

Guai o poi che mio danno
Dir non m'è conceduto
Perch' oggi è vil tenuto,
Schifando vizii, l' animo gentile.
Grave m' è per inganno,
Trovando mi traduto
Convenirmi star muto.
Richiede 'l ver talor segreto stile
Folle fui quando 'n fals' om mi commisi.
Chi vuol fuggir malvagi viva solo:
Padre inganna figliuolo
Chi men si fida via miglior ellegge
Saggio non so', ma quel ch' altrui promisi
Sempre observai, e di cio non ho lodo.
Vorrei posare e volo:
Dio tratti altrui per qual me tratta legge.

With reference to this *canzone,* Mr. Hill says: [21] "Although no form of the word *noia* is found, still the composition comes easily under the definition; for it is a poem which consists of a series of disconnected ideas, and is marked by the frequent use of a phrase expressing a sentiment of dislike or approval."

Now, if we compare the following passage in *Purga-*

[21] *Op. cit.,* p. 286.

torio XII, 25-63, with Bindo Bonichi's canzone, we shall
observe that the symmetrical arrangement is exactly the
same in both cases:

> *Vedea* colui che fu nobil creato
>   Più ch' altra creatura, giù dal cielo
>   Folgoreggiando scender da un lato.
> *Vedea* Brïarëo, fitto dal telo
>   Celestïal, giacer dall' altra parte,
>   Grave alla terra per lo mortal gelo.
> *Vedea* Timbreo, vedea Pallade e Marte,
>   Armati ancora, intorno al padre loro,
>   Mirar le membra de' Giganti sparte.
> *Vedea* Nembrot a piè del gran lavoro,
>   Quasi smarritò, e riguardar le genti
>   Che in Sennaar con lui superbi foro.
> *O* Niobè, con che occhi dolenti
>   Vedeva io te segnata in sulla strada
>   Tra sette e sette tuoi figliuoli spenti!
> *O* Saül, come in sulla propria spada
>   Quivi parevi morto in Gelboè,
>   Che poi non sentì pioggia nè rugiada!
> *O* folle Aragne, sì vedea io te
>   Già mezza aragna, trista in su gli stracci
>   Dell' opera che mal per te si fe'.
> *O* Roboam, già non par che minacci
>   Quivi il tuo segno; ma pien di spavento
>   Nel porta un carro prima che altri il cacci.
> *Mostrava* ancor lo duro pavimento
>   Come Almëon a sua madre fe' caro
>   Parer lo sventurato adornamento
> *Mostrava* come i figli si gittaro
>   Sopra Sennacherib dentro dal tempio,
>   E come, morto lui, quivi il lasciaro.
> *Mostrava* la ruïna e il crudo scempio
>   Che fe' Tamiri, quando disse a Ciro:
>   'Sangue sitisti, ed io di sangue t' empio'.
> *Mostrava* come in rotta si fuggiro
>   Gli Assiri, poi che fu morto Oloferne,
>   Ed anche le reliquie del martiro.
> *Vedëa* Troia in cenere e in caverne.
>   *O* Ilïon, come te basso e vile
>   *Mostrava* il segno che lì si discerne!

In the passage just given there are three groups of four tercets each, the initial word of each tercet of the first group being *Vedea,* that of the second *O,* and that of the third *Mostrava.* Finally, all three of these words are brought together and form the initial words of the three lines composing the tercet following the three groups just mentioned. The *canzone* of Bindo Bonichi consists of five strophes, each having a repeated phrase, which occurs at the beginning of every fourth line of the sixteen verses composing the strophe. The repeated phrase of the first strophe is *Guai a,* that of the second *Grave è,* that of the third *Foll' è,* that of the fourth *Sagg' è,* and in the fifth all four of these phrases are repeated just as *Vedea, O,* and *Mostrava* are repeated in a single tercet by Dante.[22]

OLIVER M. JOHNSTON.

[22] For examples of repetition in Old French, compare Paris, *Extraits de la Chanson de Roland,* p. xxxix; Gröber, *Zeitschrift,* VI, pp. 492-500; A. Nordfeld, *Les Couplets similaires dans la vieille épopée française,* Stockholm, 1893; Geddes, *La Chanson de Roland,* New York, 1906, p. LXI.